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Gerald Coughlin

March 4, 1937.

SENATOR PAT BURNS ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST KNOWN AND WIDELY RESPECTED MEN

He conquered great difficulties and was the Friend of All - his death morned all over the country.

The country in general mourns the loss of one of its greatest friends in the death of Pat Burns. Until he was almost eighty years of age he possessed the energy of a young man, but two years ago he was stricken with paralysis. About ten days before his death he contracted a cold and pneumonia developed which even he could not successfully fight.

From the smallest possible beginnings he built up one of the greatest organizations in America. Many have been greater in size, but none possessed greater goodwill. His policy in private life and in business was to give as much as possible under all circumstances. Years of experience had confirmed his conviction that this policy had brought him good luck, and had helped to carry him through trying times. He was generous to those with whom he did business, hoping he might be able to help someone to a better position, and his success in business life was measured by world-wide activity. His donations to charity were enormous, but never given with the expectation of anything in return, and the identity of the receiver, with few exceptions, was known only to himself. His success in private life was measured by the love and respect of friends innumerable, and an old friend

was never forgotten. The highest in the land and the humblest were equally welcome to his home.

For his unselfish efforts in helping all races and creeds, the Pope conferred on him Knighthood in the Order of St. Gregory the Great, the highest honor the Catholic Church confers upon a layman. He considered among his friends members of the clergy of every denomination.

A life-long Liberal in politics, he received his appointment to the Senate from a Conservative administration. His seat in the Senate can be filled, but his place in the community, never.

The work laid out for him was gigantic, but he had the courage and ambition to go ahead with it without fear. One of our wealthiest men, money never counted with him, but to many he gave the advice: "Look after your business and the money will look after itself."

He travelled far, and was intimately known in many lands. That he attained the heights he did was simply God's gift to one of his finest gentlemen, who lived prepared to die tomorrow, but who ran his business prepared to live forever. His memory will live long in the hearts of Canadians.

In an interview a short time before his last illness, the Senator contended, as he had always contended, that a man might prosper in the face of any difficulties life and a new country might offer, provided he had ambition and a willingness to work.

Reue (sic), the Senator admitted, opportunities spelled with a capital letter are not knocking with loud rat-a-tat-

tats at every door today. In his experience they never did.

But he contended that opportunities without a capital letter, are lurking around the corner, a bit shy, perhaps, a little bewildered, but there just the same, awaiting the man or the woman who had the courage and the initiative to go after them, lead them out into the open and make the most of them. He contended that a man must do his own thinking.

"You did your own thinking?" I inquired, thoughts of earlier days and struggles in mind.

"Yes, I did my own thinking."

The response was so prompt and definite that it left no doubt in my mind.

"If you thought out some plan that seemed feasible and after working on it for a while you had reason to believe it was not the right plan, or the time was not ripe for it, did you persist in it, or did you abandon it and try something else?"

"If a plan did not seem workable after a good tryout, I tried something else or tried handling it after another fashion. The main thing is to try."

This gallant old timer expressed the belief that the same qualities that served him when he was a young man starting on his own will serve youth today. The situation, he admitted, is different but the difference is not all to the bad he claimed.

"Today though opportunities may be shy, there are more of them as a result of many new fields opening up. In one sense conditions are much the same as when I came to Manitoba.

We were all poor. Nobody had any money or much of anything else, but in those days we did what we could for ourselves and didn't wait for someone else to do it for us. When we needed a doubletree we made one of whatever wood we could find. If the harness broke we mended it. We didn't say we could not do this or that. We got out and did for ourselves--"

"If the train running across the prairie struck a split rail and the engine went off the track, and then the coal car, and then the express car and the coaches, would people sit back and say that nothing could be done about it? That would be ridiculous. They would get busy, repair the track, plan how to get the train back where it belonged, get it there and cheer it on its way.

"That is what we have to do today. Refuse to admit defeat. Think and work. Plan to do something - then do it."

Relief, Senator Burns claimed, is demoralizing; but this assertion was made with a quick word of sympathy for the unfortunate who must be provided for, and an understanding of his difficulties.

There are always some who are unable to work, and some who cannot get work, and they must not be allowed to suffer, he held, but he had little sympathy for the man or woman who is young and able to work, and who refuses to work because the job or the pay is not to his liking.

This reminded Senator Burns of one of the big social problems arising as a result of the depression, and he continued -

"Young people should not be afraid to marry because they have no money to start with. If they care enough for each other and are willing to work, they shouldn't hestitate. Two can work better than one. That is what I tell them when they tell me they can't afford to marry."

Senator Burns did not preach the gospel of work and practice idleness, judging from the number of telephone calls, business and personal, which he answered in the course of our talk. Until he was stricken with illness he devoted a day frequently overrunning the labor limitations of his business, but he still found time for other things - kindly deeds and old friendships.

The reception room of his home where we visited was a pleasant rendezvous where old friends gathered, sure of a warm welcome. It is a "well-lived-in" room with a big fireplace and comfortable chairs and a homey hospitable atmosphere. Doubtless many reminiscences have been exchanged by old timers gathered around the glowing fire on winter evenings - talks of struggles and adventures and good times when the West was young -

Coming away I paused for an instant in the garden to admire four graceful cutleaf birch trees unfurling banners of tender green. Then as I passed through the iron gates I wondered whether I had sensed the keys with which Senator Burns had opened the doors of success. Courage, initiative,

intelligence, willingness to work, eyes that refused to see defeat, quick sympathy, appreciation of the efforts of others, a love of beauty--

Back in the late seventies stray travellers journeying along the trail which led from Winnipeg to Minnedosa might have observed a sturdy young wayfarer stepping along briskly, evidently with a purpose.

Prologue

The pedestrian was young Pat Burns, a homesteader in the Minnedosa district, who usually travelled the trail with a string of ox carts laden with settlers' effects, for the Minnedosa district was then in the course of settlement.

Behind the incident lay a story. The young homesteader from Ontario made the most of the fleeting days by freighting when his homestead duties were not pressing. The procedure he followed was to go to Winnipeg, buy some oxen and carts, hunt up some incoming settlers and arrange to transport their extra effects to the homesteads they had chosen. On arrival at Minnedosa he delivered the freight, sold the surplus oxen and proceeded to Winnipeg for another venture.

One day someone asked him how long it would take to walk from Winnipeg to Minnedosa.

"I don't know," he replied, "but I'll find out."

When he reported his findings he knew what he was talking about. Sensing that the knowledge might be useful, he had travelled the sixty miles onfoot to find out just how long it would take.

March, 1937.

A GRAND OLD MAN

On Saturday, February 27th, the last of the grand old men of the West - the men who had pioneered the way for settlement - was laid at rest in Calgary.

Senator Patrick Burns was more than a man. To many he was an institution. He typified Western Canada in the minds of those to whom Calgary was but a name. He found Alberta the habitat of Indians and scattered beef herds. He lived to do more than one man's part in its upbuilding. He made employment for thousands, and left behind him a record for integrity which has seldom been equalled. His good works will live after him.

Today we alid away the last of the great pioneers of Canada. His burial place was such as he himself would have chosen, just under the brow of the high hill that dominates the north-western corner of St. Mary's Cemetery. At the foot of the hill, directly in the valley below, lies Calgary, the city to which he came in its cow-town, rough-and ready days, half a century ago, and whose progress he had promoted to a greater extent than any one other man.

He was its first citizen by common consent of its lesser citizens, by length of residence, and by reason of the benefits he had conferred upon it.

To the right rise the tall buildings of the industry he founded and fostered, the largest and the economic main-stay of Calgary.

Above the trees marking the course of the Elbow River, rise the twin towers of St. Mary's cathedral, where he had worshipped ever since its construction, more than forty years ago.

A little farther to the north can be seen the red roof of the castellated stone residence where he lived and entertained his friends.

Thus lying at the foot of the spot where kindly Mother Earth has claimed him, cluster the visible evidence of his principal interests. Not all, however, because the mind and hand of this amazing man searched out where there was good to be done or an interest of his beloved West to be forwarded.

On Thursday morning, February 25th, the half-masted flag hoisted over the Calgary plant brought to us forcibly the arrival of the day which we had known could not be indefinitely delayed.

In the mid year of 1935 he was suddenly stricken with thrombusus, and the incandescence of that brilliant mind ceased to glow. The vocal chords were affected, and for a time he was as helpless as a child. Gradually his fighting spirit reasserted itself. He fought off disease, re-acquired the use of sufficient vocabulary to make known his wants. He re-acquired the use of his limbs, and with magnificent determination recommenced his daily rides in his car whenever weather permitted. He put on weight.

There was no longer present, the bodily strength, acquired in his youth on the old Ontario farm, on which his indomitable will might lean.

The closing days of his long reign were peaceful. Yielding to the inevitable, he no longer troubled himself with the cares of business. His chief delight in the past few months was his youngest grand-nephew, another little soul named for himself, who may one day grow up to carry on the work he must now lay down.

On Wednesday night it became apparent that the sands of life were running out, and that the end could not be much longer delayed. His household was summoned to his bedside; John Burns, his nephew and successor, on whose able shoulders his mantle had fallen since his retirement from active management of the Company; Mrs. Halliday, who had managed his household for thirty years; Dr. Scarlett, his physician; and his friend, Rt. Rev. Monsignor Smith, Rector of St. Mary's Cathedral.

And so, bearing as his passport the one thing a man can take with him, his mighty deeds of charity, his labors which had been so generously given to build up an empire and an industry that millions might follow him and prosper in the beautiful prairie country - Patrick Burns, poor farm boy, indomitable pioneer, empire builder, magnificent philanthropist, the creator of the largest packing industry in Canada, Knight Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, Knight of St. John of Jerusalem, with the simple child-like faith with which God had always animated him and

humanized his business life, passed over the border of the last mysterious frontier to meet his only son who had died during his own last illness, and who now lies by his side high on St. Mary's Hill.

Twenty-two years ago I met him first. His vast enterprises were then just getting into their stride. He had passed through the pioneer stage of his career. The country was dotted with the evidence of his ability and his restlessness. Calgary was then the centre of his business, but he also had a well-equipped packing house in Vancouver, which has also retained its dominance at Canada's Pacific Gateway. The large packing house at Edmonton had just been opened.

The Great War had just smashed its way onto an unprepared world stage. The necessity for meeting national and imperial emergencies added the necessary incentive to start a program of development commensurate to the occasion, and to the development which he prophesied would follow.

The keynotes of his character, vision and decision, recognized the occasion and rose to meet it. With bloody terror sweeping over Europe and Britain threatened, troops must be fed at all costs. Patrick Burns was appointed by the British Government to organize the purchase of its beef supplies in America, and the trust was more than vindicated. To aid in meeting the emergency and to take care of subsequent trade, packing houses were purchased, rebuilt and modernized at Winnipeg, and Prince Albert. The poor farm boy of Kirkfield, Ontario, had arrived.

When P. Burns & Co., Limited, was sold in 1928 to the Dominion Securities Limited, of Toronto, to be re-incorporated and sold to the public, his business had grown to include 65 creameries, 11 wholesale branches, foreigh branch offices in London, Liverpool and Tokyo, and two subsidiaries, Palm Dairies Limited and Consolidated Fruit Co., Limited, each the largest in its own field in Canada. The ranch properties, among which were famous ranches like the Bar U, the Willow Creek, the 44, the Bow Valley, and many others, were retained by him, and their operation became his chief concern.

One field of endeavor which Patrict Burns consistently shunned was politics. Every major party, completely deceived by his simple and unassuming exterior, would have profited by his wealth. All invitations to stand for elective office were gently but firmly refused. Nor did he until the Rt. Hon. R.B. Bennett, then Prime Minister of Canada, offered him a vacant senatorship for Alberta, as a mark of honor on his 75th birthday, assume any public office. This appointment established a new precedent in public affairs, as he was the first Liberal on record to be appointed by a Conservative Government to the Canadian Senate. Each year following his appointment, until his last illness, he attended its sessions.

One of the greatest of his many gifts was his uncanny appreciation of talent, and his ability to surround himself with men who could further his plans. Many of these men left his employ to assume public positions of importance, and even yet these men loom large in the minds of Calgary's citizens.

Senator Burns knew us all by our first and last names; his memory was uncanny.

His employees were privileged to deposit their surplus earnings with him at something more than bond interest rates, and evidences of thrift were marks that did not escape his attention. He had known poverty, and while he gave away as much as $60,000 in one year to worthy causes, principally the helping of others to help themselves, wastefulness and laziness were in his eyes two major crimes.

To his neighbors in his home village of Kirkfield, he was natural leader.

A guard of honor composed of many decorated officers of the 31st "Calgary" Regiment, of which he was the Honorary Colonel, did honor to him as he was borne to his last rest. In St. Mary's Cathedral during the solemn service which marked his last appearance before its altar were representatives of every major religious denomination in Calgary, every public body, every business competitor. The chief soloist in the choir was an internationally famous grand opera star who had been one of his proteges. In every heart in that vast throng was the thought expressed by Shakespeare:

> "His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world: This was a man."

And as his casket was gently lowered into the lap of Mother Earth, every heart surrounding that grave sent up an answering echo to the prayer of the celebrant:-

"Grant unto him eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual Light shine upon him. May he rest in peace."

Scarlet and Gold
Ninteenth Edition, 1937.

THE MAN ON HORSEBACK

Leader among the pioneers, a colorful era ended when the hand of Death removed the beloved figure of "Pat" Burns from this earthly sphere, at the ripe age of 81, on February 24th, 1937.

His passing concluded that period when men, as frontiersmen, cattlemen, farmers, cowboys and police, rode the plains unflinchingly in the teeth of winter blizzards or burning summer suns, to accomplish duty nobly done.

Before the N.W.M. Police grew from a mere handful of men, the late "Pat" Burns was wont to say that they had saved his business for him, since he, no less than great British cattle syndicates operating in the Northwest Territories (now Alberta), had suffered considerably in the loss of horses and cattle through the depredations of the Indians. And he never failed to pay tribute, when occasion arose, to the men who had brought law and order to the last great West.

Given few advantages in education, the question was often asked: "By what alchemy did this man rise to such a position of power and wealth?" First, it might be con-

ceded, through his entirely human aspect, his kindly geniality, his vision in taking advantage of conditions in a new and virgin country; but above all, the fact that in his dealings with his fellow men he dealt fairly and squarely and never lost the common touch which makes brothers of us all.

VISCOUNT BENNETT'S TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HONORABLE PATRICK BURNS

Office of the Leader of the Opposition
House of Commons, Canada,
Ottawa, 13th October, 1937

The Editor, Scarlet & Gold,

R.C.M.P.

My dear Editor,

I appreciate the privilege you extend to me of contributing to Scarlet & Gold, and I gladly avail myself of the opportunity afforded to pay a brief tribute to our beloved fellow-citizen, the late Senator Patrick Burns, affectionately called by all who knew him, "Pat" Burns.

The careers of men who arise from almost penniless youth to positions of wealth and influence are always part of the history of a growing community. On that phase of Pat Burns' career much could be written. His life typifies the most important period in the development of the Canadian North West. Personal courage, a sense of adventure, and abounding faith in this great country were especially characteristic of him and were no doubt essential in the

making of such an epic career. Not only did he establish one of the largest packing and provisioning businesses in the world, with packing plants throughout Canada and in the United States, with their various subsidiary enterprises, but he acquired a business reputation which extended to three continents. He was a generous champion of education, as a number of students can testify, and his practical support of public charities never relaxed.

Great as all these traits of character and acts of accomplishment are to be valued, I somehow feel that the readers of Scarlet & Gold will be thinking at this time more of Pat Burns as they used to meet him, disengaged from his business enterprises and public activities. They think of him as the "man on horseback", of the great robust prairie pattern, a fine and graceful rider. They think of him as one who was never too busy to acknowledge a friendly salutation, and as one who extended and enjoyed a warm and vigorous handshake. They think of him as one who always held out a helping hand to others, one who personified the true Western spirit. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that he was known on every homestead of the Prairies, and he was certainly one of the most colorful figures in the Canada of his day. His life is recalled, not without regret, as that of one who outlived Alberta's romantic era of the rancher and cowboy.

With the numbers of our pioneers necessarily diminishing, we cling to the memory of men of that period whom it was our privilege to personally know. Their's were the qualities

which have made, and are still making Canada.

As busier years crowd in upon us and we have to face the more complex problems that industry and urban development bring with them, Pat Burns will remain with us and with those who come after us as an institution and a symbol of our Western history.

Yours faithfully,

R. B. BENNETT